Based on the Motion Picture Screenplay
Written by Charles Edward Pogue
Story by Patrick Read Johnson &
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DragonHeart™

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The Movie Storybook

Written by Leslie McGuire

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First Edition
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DRACO

The last of a powerful, ancient race of dragons, he pledged to watch over all people who lived by the teachings of the Old Code.

BOWEN

More noble of heart than the prince he taught, this courageous knight would uphold the Old Code even when his head told him to betray it.

EINON

The young prince who became a king in his evil father's image, Einon's only honor and strength lay in the borrowed half of a dragon's heart.

KARA

A brave and beautiful peasant girl whose hope guided her people—and an errant knight—in the struggle to gain back their lives, their land, and their honor.

FRIAR GILBERT

The sweet-natured poet, monk, and scholar who pledged to *experience* the greatest event of the century rather than merely write about it.

AISLINN

The noble queen who begged a dragon to share his life and heart with her beloved son, only to be betrayed by her son in the end.

"That's not nearly good enough to defend the Old Code," laughed Sir Bowen, knocking Prince Einon to the ground.

"I thought this was a lesson in fighting!" Einon snarled, leaping back up to attack again.

Bowen jumped out of range. "It is a lesson, but the Old Code says a knight is sworn to valor. His heart knows only virtue. His blade defends the helpless. His might upholds the weak. His words speak only truth . . ."

"And his wrath undoes the wicked," mumbled Einon. He had heard this many times before.

"You can only undo the wicked if you fight *and live*!" said Bowen, knocking Einon down again.

Suddenly a rider broke into the clearing. "The peasants are rebelling! The king wants his son to witness his victory!"

"There's nothing noble about crushing desperate men!" Bowen said. But Prince Einon was already riding off with Brok, the king's right-hand man. Bowen had no choice but to follow them.

"I wish we were down there," said Prince Einon from up on the hill. He was watching his father's men slash through the peasant defenses.

"No you don't," muttered Sir Bowen. "Remember the Old Code and the difference between butchery and battle when you are king. Then you will be a greater ruler than your father."

But because Bowen was watching King Freyne storm into the village, he didn't see the dark glint in Einon's eyes. Suddenly Prince Einon screamed, "He's trapped!"

King Freyne was surrounded by angry peasants led by Redbeard, one of the rebels. Ignoring Bowen, the boy spurred his horse down the hill into the battle.

Pitchforks and axes rose and fell as the rebels attacked the fallen king. By the time Einon reached his father, it was too late. Glancing around, Einon yanked the crown from his dying father's hands. But his actions had not gone unnoticed.

High above him, a young girl was perched in a tree, waiting. She leaped down onto Einon, knocking him back. The greedy prince staggered, then fell. A sharp spike pierced his breast just above his heart. His newly gained crown fell into the mud.

"Einon!" shouted Bowen as he desperately tried to get to the boy through the smoke and fighting. Just as the fatally wounded prince locked his fingers onto the fallen crown, Bowen swept him up and galloped through the battle.

The red-haired girl dove out of the way as the knight, high upon his steed and holding Einon's wounded body, knocked over milk barrels and stacks of cheese in a race against time.

Although her only child seemed beyond help, Prince Einon's mother, Queen Aislinn, would not give up hope. Despite the fears of her men, Einon was carried on a pallet up the mountain to the dragon's cave.

"Lord! Great One! I need your help!" Queen Aislinn called into the cave.

"Freyne's child!" came a mournful voice from the shadows. "Dragonslayer's wife!"

"His widow!" begged Aislinn. "Don't forget! I was a bride of conquest! My people were slaughtered just as yours were. This child is not like his father. He's learning the Old Code—your ways—from this knight! I swear!"

"*He* must swear!" echoed the voice from the shadows. "Knight, give me your sword! Boy, swear your father's bloodlust and tyranny die with him! Swear you will live and rule with mercy! Promise to learn the Once-Ways!"

Einon raised his head. "I . . . swear!" The effort was too much. The boy fell back into Bowen's arms.

"He's dead!" gasped Bowen. Drawing his sword, Bowen lunged at the creature.

"Peace, Knight of the Old Code," ordered the dragon, scoring a groove in Bowen's blade with one of his razor-sharp talons. "Witness the wonders of an ancient glory!"

Slowly the dragon lifted one of the scales on his glittering breast. Using a talon, he carved a deep slice. Brilliant and glowing red light spilled out, flowing from the wound into his cupped claw.

Holding the glowing ball of light over Einon, the dragon said, "Half my heart will make you whole. Its strength will purify your weakness. Live! And remember your oath!"

A thin sliver of fire flowed from the glow, suddenly sealing the wound in Einon's chest. The scar began to glow with the red light of the dragon's heart.

Just then, Einon's eyes fluttered open. He was weak, but alive!

Queen Aislinn and Sir Bowen rose, bowing to the dragon as flame sprayed from his nostrils, lighting their torches to show them the way out.

"I have served the father only for the sake of the son," said Bowen to the dragon. "Forgive my doubts. Call whenever you should need me, and ask what you will. My sword and service are yours!"

"Simply remind the boy always of his vow, Knight of the Old Code," said the dragon as he faded back into the darkness of his lair. With that, the small band made their way out of the cave.

"Your Majesty," gasped Brok. "All is well?"

Feeling the scar, Einon gazed down, remembering the dragon. "All is very well," he said in a daze. Reaching for the crown, Einon placed it on his head. It slid down over one ear as the new king gazed at the ruins of his father's old fortress.

"The Romans built this great fortress, and I will rebuild it," Einon swore. "And it will be even greater than before—no matter how many men it takes to rebuild!"

And the young king did indeed keep his promise—the one to rebuild the fortress. Every day he went to the quarries, where he forced the peasants to work like dogs. He liked to watch the peasants sweat.

"Come to thank me, boy?" called Redbeard, the rebel who had killed Einon's father. "You should. I'm the one who made you king!"

Furious, Einon told his men to blind the red-haired peasant.

Just then, Bowen appeared. "Stop! Don't do this!" gasped Bowen. "You have been bewitched! Remember the Code!"

"I am *above* the Code!" cried Einon, whipping out his sword and attacking his old teacher.

But Bowen was still the better swordsman. When he finally pinned Einon down, he sobbed, "No one is above the Code, least of all the king!"

Redbeard's daughter, Kara, watched helplessly as Bowen rode off, leaving her father to his ugly fate.

Bowen rode back to the cave in a fury. The dragon's evil heart beat within the boy's breast. Because of this, Bowen was convinced that any promise made by young King Einon had no chance of being upheld. Because of the dragon, the Old Code was being trampled in the blood and sweat of the peasants as they built Einon's new fortress. The long ago gift of half the dragon's heart had been a curse, not a blessing. Queen Aislinn must have been very wrong about the ancient dragon race.

Vowing to destroy the winged creature, Bowen strode deep into the cave. But there was no dragon to be found.

Angrily striking his sword against the cave walls, Bowen cried, "No matter where you fly, Dragon, no matter where you hide, I'll find you! I make a new vow! I will spend the rest of my days hunting you down!"

As his vow echoed through the mountains, it seemed as if he was being answered by a mournful musical trill. Could the dragon have heard him?

"This is the tale of a knight who slew a dragon and vanquished evil . . ." mumbled Friar Gilbert, swaying from side to side on his mule.

"Out of the way, Friar!" snapped Bowen, who was racing after a runaway dragon. He returned moments later with the dragon's severed horn, and hung it on his shield with all the others.

"Magnificent!" said the friar, patting his pile of scrolls. "Your heroics, Knight, are befitting these great tales of the days of the Round Table!"

Bowen paid little attention. He'd spent seven years hunting for one particular dragon and had not found him yet. "There's too little glory to be shared in this kill."

"Modesty as well as valor," sighed the friar, impressed again. "The Code of King Arthur's ancient Camelot still lives in you!"

Just then, Lord Felton arrived. He was one of Einon's loyal followers. "Well done, Knight. Our gratitude—mine *and* King Einon's!"

"Keep the gratitude," snapped Bowen. "I'll take the gold instead—yours *or* the king's!"

Not far away, King Einon was on a hunting trip with his knights. On their return, weighted down with all the game they had caught, they stopped at the quarry to check on the progress in building Einon's fortress.

Kara was giving her blind father some food and a drink when Einon saw her. Raising his bow, he shot the ladle out of her hand, then knocked over the water bucket.

"Stand still, Father!" Kara gasped. She ran straight to the king and pleaded for mercy.

"You've got nerve interfering with the king's sport!" snarled Einon.

"Your Majesty," begged Kara. "There's no sport in tormenting a sick old man. It's been years! The castle is built! Release him!"

"I've always said death is a release," snarled Einon. With that, he shot an arrow into Redbeard's chest and rode away. Redbeard died instantly.

Tying her father's headband around her throat, Kara vowed at that moment to avenge his death—no matter what it took.

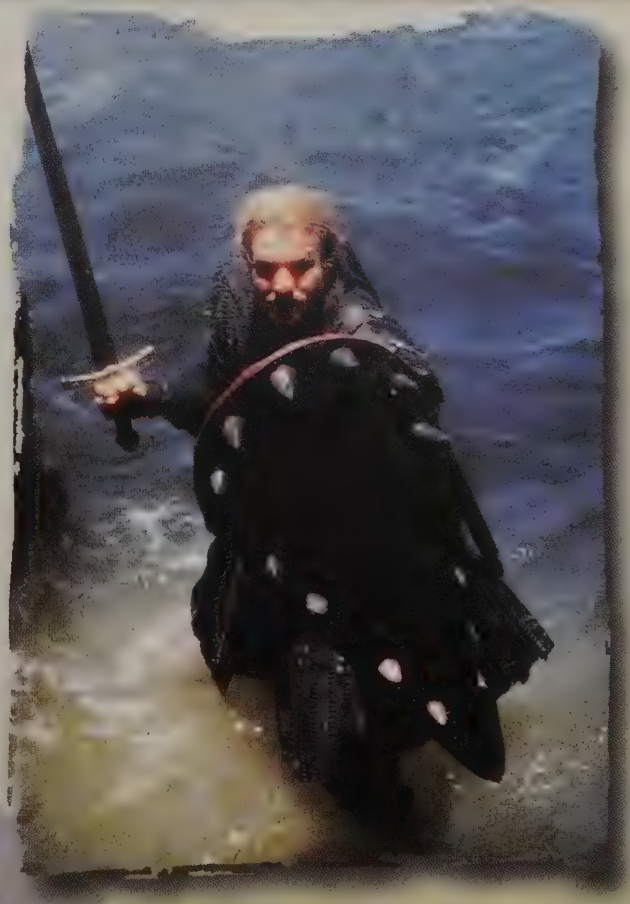
Friar Gilbert was totally impressed by Bowen—a man he saw as a real, live dragonslaying knight! He asked if they could travel together. Gilbert wanted to write about this brave hero. But Bowen didn't think much of Friar Gilbert's poems—nor his quest for Avalon, the legendary King Arthur's resting place!

"Avalon is a fable!" Bowen said. "And prayers cannot bring to life the ghost of the Old Code! Besides, I already have a quest—to slay *all* dragons, and one in particular."

But Bowen could not change Friar Gilbert's mind. The friar followed a short distance behind Bowen, writing all the while, until Bowen came upon a new dragon lair. It was right by a waterfall. The monk sat on a rock, and began to scribble, grumbling, "Heroics don't make heroes, ballad makers do!"

The friar didn't see the large eye open under his legs!

The rock shuddered, then rose up, knocking Friar Gilbert against Bowen. Both of them crashed into the water, coming up just in time to see a glittering tail disappear into the waterfall!



Bowen drew his sword and dashed through the waterfall.

A bolt of flame hit his shield, and Bowen looked up to see the great hulk of the dragon above him on a ledge. Bones littered the floor of the cave. And there was the dragon, the most enormous and powerful of all winged creatures. The cave seemed to shudder when he spoke.

"Why must you knights out to make a name for yourselves always pick on us dragons?" he said.

"I don't *need* a name," snarled Bowen.

"Oh!" said the dragon. "So *you're* the one who kills for money!"

"It's a living!" Bowen answered nastily.

"Well, since you seek a profit from killing me," said the dragon, "you might as well begin!"

Bowen raised his sword into the light. "It's not the profit, it's the pleasure!"

The dragon jumped back when he saw the long talon scratch in Bowen's sword, his eyes growing wide as he remembered the knight.

"Perhaps it will be less pleasurable and more costly than you think!" the dragon responded quietly. Then the creature swooped off the ledge and out of the waterfall. Bowen's jaw dropped. The dragon was escaping!

Bowen chased after the great winged creature. Tossing up a roped weapon as the dragon rose high in the sky, Bowen snared one of his talons.

The dragon stopped short in the sky, then fell crashing to earth. Bowen charged, and the dragon's tail lashed out, knocking Bowen into a tree. But the sharp-edged tail was wedged in the trunk, trapping the huge creature.

Teasing Bowen with spurts of fire shot from his nose, the dragon waited for Bowen to come close. Just as Bowen stepped over the fallen weapon, the dragon yanked his talon. Bowen went flying—right into the dragon's mouth!

Bowen was trapped! But his sword was pointed up at the roof of the dragon's mouth. "If your jaw comes down, my sword goes up!" the knight warned. The two sat like that for hours, neither moving an inch.

"Id theems we're in a bit ubf a thtalemate, wouldn't you thay?" said the dragon finally.

"Watch it!" said Bowen, wiping dragon spit off his face. "So what do you suggest?"

"A truce! Ged outta ma mouf! Let's talk!"

Bowen agreed. He was exhausted. Once he was back on the ground, the dragon explained his plan.

The next day, while Friar Gilbert watched, Bowen rode up to Lord Felton's mill just as the dragon swooped overhead. The villagers panicked. Bowen agreed to save them and kill the dragon for them, but only if they paid him in advance.

Everyone watched, terrified, as Bowen built a great weapon with a harpoon attached. When the creature came back for another pass, Bowen shot the harpoon high up into the air. Dipping his wing, the dragon looked like he had been shot through the heart. But he'd actually caught the harpoon in his claw!

Spinning wildly, the dragon howled in fake pain. Then with a flip and a long dramatic spiral, he plunged into the lake. The crowd sent up a cheer of relief. They thought the dragon was dead. The knight had saved them! Bowen had earned his gold!

But when Bowen rode off into the sunset, the double-crossing Felton sent his men to steal back the gold. Sir Bowen, however, was nowhere to be found.

"Such trickery hardly befits a knight of the Old Code," the dragon remarked once they were hidden from the village. "You know, 'His might upholds the weak'—remember all that?"

"That's only a memory, Dragon," said Bowen. "Nothing can bring back the Old Code! Besides, I don't want to change the world. I just try to get by in it!"

"I guess it's better than death," said the dragon sadly. "I long for death, but I also fear it!"

"Why, Dragon?" asked Bowen. "What's to lose?"

"My soul," answered the dragon quietly. "And stop calling me Dragon! I have a name!"

But before he could say it, the dragon was wracked with pain. Worried, Bowen covered up the creature to keep him warm. When the dragon felt better, Bowen said, "I've found a name for you! We'll name you after the Draco constellation."

"I would be honored to be named after those stars," said the creature. "And what is your name?"

"Bowen," answered the knight.

"Thank you, Bowen," said Draco. They shook hands in a bond of solemn loyalty to each other.

The knight and the dragon were not the only ones seeking revenge. Kara, angry about her father's senseless death, was hiding in King Einon's dinner hall armed with a knife.

Einon stopped her just in time. He snatched her knife, pinning her to the table. "I know you! The blind dog's brat!" He grinned nastily. "Now you will share your father's fate!"

"In your kingdom, Einon, there are worse things than death!" answered Kara.

"Lock her up!" snapped the king.

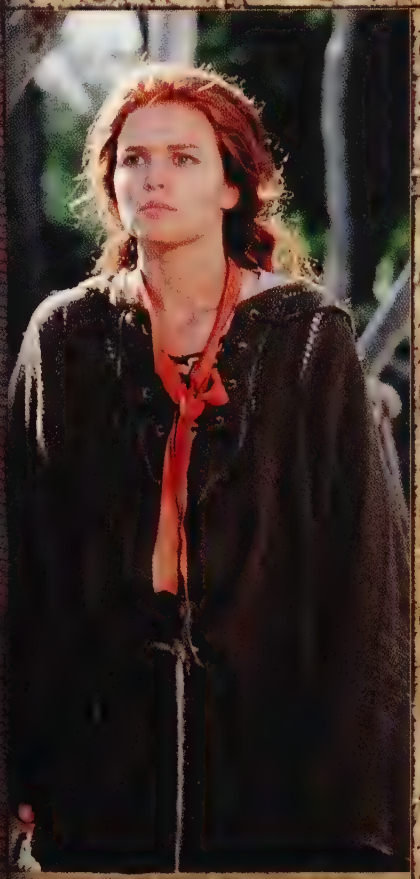
His mother, Queen Aislinn, played chess and pretended not to notice. But later, Aislinn made her way quietly to Kara's chamber. "I've come to help," she said.

"I need no help from the beast's mother!" snapped Kara. "I would have smothered him in his crib!"

"You think so," said Aislinn sadly. "But I did not see the monster he would become when he was a tiny babe. Not until it was too late!"

Aislinn went to a corner of the chamber and pressed a hidden spring. The wall slid back, revealing a secret passage. "Do not wish for death, girl, when there's freedom!"

Aislinn took Kara down to a hidden passageway. Then, showing her the wooden steps and a door, the queen disappeared into the darkness.



Kara raced back to her village and tried to convince the peasants to attack King Einon. But the villagers did not want to listen to her. Throwing rotten vegetables and mud at her, they tried to drive her away.

"Listen to me!" she screamed. "King Einon made you slaves! It's time to fight back!"

A blacksmith named Hewe threw a great gob of mud at her face, saying, "Your father sang that sour song once, Kara, and we *did* fight back. We lost badly. Once was enough!" He pointed to his eye patch to remind her of the pain he had gone through.

Kara ignored him. "So, Hewe, should we just cringe under Einon's boot like dogs?"

Hewe was about to throw a squash at her when Bowen snatched it from his hand. As the knight offered a bite of the squash to Kara, an old woman screamed. Kara shoved the squash in Bowen's face as every eye in the village looked up.

Draco's tail had knocked a thatched roof to the ground. The dragon was coming toward them, spewing great balls of fire at Kara's village!

Bowen was relieved that Draco had finally showed up. "It's about time, you show off," Bowen muttered to himself, getting ready for the show that he and Draco had already practiced many times before.

Bowen quickly offered to get rid of Draco for the villagers. But they knew Brok would take the payment out of their wages.

"Well," said Bowen, "I can charge a bit less. But it *is* a fair offer! Take it—or deal with him all by yourselves!" The knight pointed to the dragon circling above.

As the villagers muttered among themselves, Kara shoved through. "Are you going to be bullied by him?"

Bowen laughed and pointed at a villager with three daughters. "I hear dragons like young girls to be sacrificed to them. How about your daughters?"

The villager was horrified. Hewe looked at Kara. "Why must it be one of *those* three girls?"

All eyes turned to Kara as Bowen rode off to await their decision. From his rocky hiding place, Bowen watched as the villagers rolled out a cart with Kara tied to it. Draco soon joined him.

"Who's the girl?" asked Draco.

"A nuisance," replied Bowen. "Eat her."

"Yechh!" replied the dragon. "I have never swallowed people! I only chewed in self-defense!"

"Well then, fake it," Bowen snapped. He rode down to the village.

Draco sighed and swooped down over the cart. As he grabbed Kara in his claw, she screamed, then fainted. The crowd cheered. The knight had lived up to his promise and saved them from the dragon!

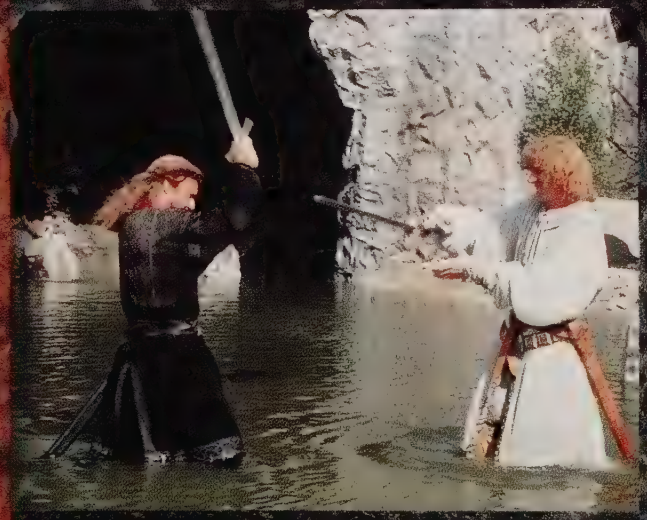
Bowen rode back to their rocky hiding place. But much to his surprise, he found Draco singing sweetly to Kara who lay sunning herself on a rock.

"You're not like a dragon at all," Kara was saying.

Draco leaned in smoothly and answered, "I never hurt a soul unless they try to hurt me first."

"Then what were you doing in my village?" Kara asked.

"Yes," said Bowen, disgusted at this new friendship. "You remember the village, don't you, Dragon?"



"Shhh! Someone's coming!" Draco said, sliding behind the waterfall. "Horses!"

Bowen turned just in time to see Einon, Brok, and a search party ride up.

"It can't be! The king's old mentor still giving carving lessons!" laughed Einon. "And he's with my lost lady!"

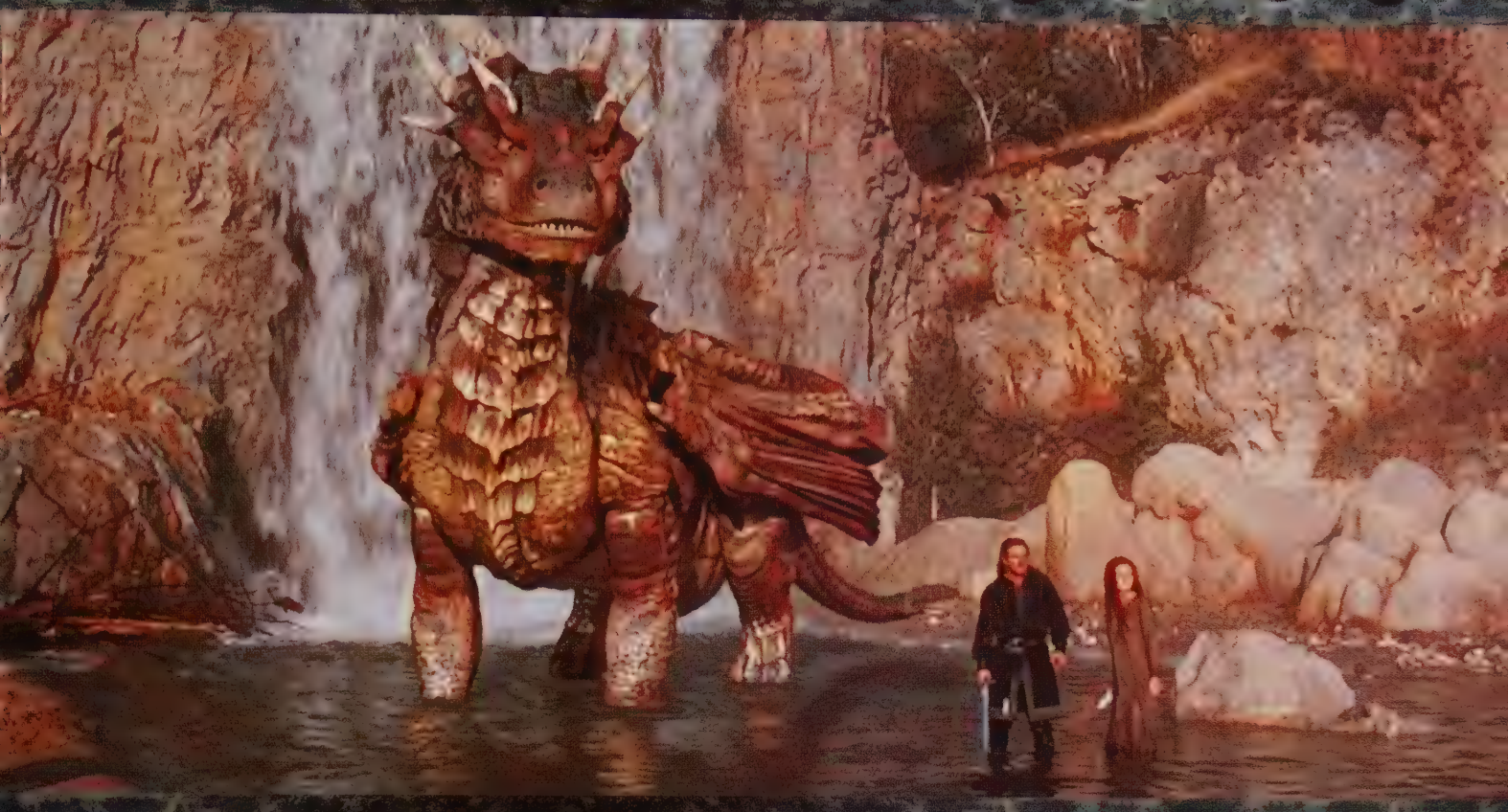
"I think the lady wants to *stay* lost!" said Bowen, knocking Einon from his horse.

Einon lunged at Bowen. "You are a sorry scrap of a dead world and dead beliefs, indeed! he snarled.

"They were *your* beliefs, too!" Bowen said. "You spoke the words of the Old Code from your heart!"

"I vomited them up because I couldn't stomach them," snarled Einon. "I knew it was what you wanted to hear!"

When Bowen realized how evil Einon had become, he let down his guard. Einon's sword pierced his shoulder! At that moment, Draco landed between them. Raising his wings, Drac pulled back his chest scales, revealing the scar! Terrified, and now recognizing the dragon, Einon jumped on his horse and galloped away



Bowen staggered to Draco's side. "Who asked you to butt in? I had everything under control!"

Draco didn't answer. He was very disturbed. So was Kara.

"Just how do you two know each other?" Kara asked. She was beginning to get suspicious. Suddenly she realized that Draco and Bowen could help her village get out from under King Einon's rule. "Men like you could lead others and give them hope!" she said hopefully.

"False hope," replied Bowen, refusing to help her. "The last time they tried to beat Einon, it ended in a massacre. I know, I was there!"

"So was I," Kara cried, furious. "One of those rebels was my father!"

Though Bowen would not change his mind, he was saddened by her courage. He thought she was just dreaming impossible dreams. He signaled to Draco who was flying overhead. "Meet you in the next village!" he called, ignoring the furious Kara.

Before Bowen rode off, Draco sadly said, "Einon will not die in my lifetime!" Neither Kara nor Bowen responded.

The dreary village Draco and Bowen were headed for was an island in a swamp. Kara followed them, yelling, "This knight is a fake! He and the dragon are working together!"

Friar Gilbert contradicted her, enthusiastically telling everyone about Bowen's heroic dragonslaying.

But this time the fake dragonslaying show went badly. Draco landed in mud instead of sinking in the water. The villagers were about to kill Bowen, Kara, and Friar Gilbert when Draco grabbed them up and flew them to the sight of an ancient ruin. It was Avalon!

"Most holy Brother Gilbert," said Draco. "Here the Once-Ways still live. And so does the one who shared our name: King Arthur, The Pendragon!"

Bowen slowly moved through the great columns, touching the ancient stones of the legendary Round Table. "Here was Sir Gawain's place. Here was Sir Lancelot's. Even Galahad's!"

"It is a divine omen!" cried Friar Gilbert. He turned to Kara. "I am ready to join you in your fight to strike down tyranny once and for all!"

"Will you join us?" Friar Gilbert asked Bowen. But Bowen flatly refused. Sadly shaking her head, Kara asked Draco to wish them luck.

Feeling Bowen needed to know, Draco solemnly told them the story of his race, about how the wisest of the dragons made all other dragons swear to watch over mankind. How, on his death, that wise dragon became the constellation, Draco. And how since then, heroic dragons became stars when they died.

"I wanted to perform one heroic deed to ensure my place in the sky," said Draco forlornly. "A great sacrifice that would reunite man and dragon—"

"It was *you*!" gasped Bowen, interrupting him. "It's *your* half heart that beats in Einon's chest!"

"Yes. I thought my heart could change him," said Draco. "But I was wrong. I will join you in your fight, Kara. Farewell, Bowen."

Disgusted with all three of them, Bowen stalked away into the night.

Alone in the world, Bowen pulled his cloak tightly around him and looked for some shelter from the rain. He finally found a small hollow in a crumbling turret of the castle walls. Crawling inside, he tried to keep away the wind-whipped chill of the night. Suddenly he heard a whisper.

"Valor . . ."

Bowen sprang up and peered into the mist. Nothing. But the whisper came again, this time from the columns.

"A knight is sworn to valor . . ."

Bowen realized he was now hearing the ancient voices of the ghosts of King Arthur's Camelot. Sir Lancelot and King Arthur emerged from the stone columns, and spoke the words of the Old Code. As Bowen repeated them to himself, he began to cry.

As quickly as they had begun, the voices stopped. Arthur disappeared, and again Bowen was alone. But he was not the same man. He had been transformed by the power of those ancient words.

As lightning flashed again, Draco stepped out of the shadows and stretched one wing out to cover and protect his friend from the downpour. Together, knight and dragon stayed huddled in the shadow of that rocky symbol of their once lost dreams—and their new hope.

From then on, it was only a question of training the villagers to fight. Bowen made sure each peasant knew how to make and use swords, axes, and anything that would do damage.

Friar Gilbert proved to be a natural marksman with the bow. Kara was an equally ferocious fighter with an ax. Even reluctant Hewe had to admit they made a great fighting force with all their new training.

The day before the battle was to begin, Kara presented Bowen with a brand new handmade shield. On it, traced in gold, was an emblem. It was Draco!

"This is the symbol of your courage," she said.

By themselves, Friar Gilbert and Kara had no luck convincing the villagers to take on King Einon and his knights.

"This time we can win!" Kara insisted. "We have—"

But Hewe wouldn't let her finish. "I don't want to understand!" he yelled, pointing again to his eye patch.

"But we have been joined by—" Kara began again. Hewe merely waved his shovel at her angrily.

Just at that moment, Bowen rode up, his armor shining and his eyes blazing with the fire of newfound honor.

"I'll start the fight with Einon!" he cried.

"You and what army?" laughed Hewe.

"He'll join!" said Bowen, pointing to the crest of the hill, where Draco rose up over the ridge, glowing and magnificent.

The next day, wearing the headband that had belonged to Kara's father—and with her words of love ringing in his ears—Bowen and a small band of villagers set out for the gates of Einon's castle. Draco joined the rebels as they rode to the king's fortress. No one inside that fortress would have guessed the secret about the rebels' plan.

Einon, seeing the small band outside, decided there was nothing to fear. His mother had just that morning presented him with a gift—five Tartar dragonslayers, the best in the world! His new dragonslayers would deal a death blow to Draco and the rebellious villagers at the same time. But despite the strength of their crossbows and harpoons, the dragonslayers couldn't bring down the dragon. Draco dipped out of the sky, shooting bursts of flame.

The battlements instantly caught fire and exploded. The explosion blew men, weapons, and pieces of stone in every direction!

Einon immediately saw that he was in a flaming trap. He and his knights swarmed out of the castle gates, chasing the rebels into the forest. But the forest was yet another trap! Peasants by the hundreds swooped down from the trees! Einon and the mounted knights were already having trouble maneuvering their horses in the thick underbrush when the villagers set it ablaze.

"Retreat!" screamed Einon, trying to control his mount. He was losing the battle!

The knights were in full retreat when Einon came upon Kara and Bowen, desperately fighting for their lives.

Friar Gilbert saw Einon preparing to kill his friends. Despite his vow of peace toward all mankind, the friar muttered, "Thou shalt not kill!" and aimed an arrow right at Einon's heart.

As the arrow pierced deep, Einon fell—but he felt no pain! Swooping over the castle walls, however, Draco screeched as if the arrow had pierced his own chest. As Einon watched the agonized dragon fall behind the battlements, he was struck by the coincidence. Then, startled to still be alive, he stared down at the arrow in his chest. With a smile, he calmly pulled the arrow out and stood peering at the castle walls.

Einon's eyes glinted with understanding. Of course! That would explain why he had never been mortally wounded. That was why all his cuts and sores healed instantly. That was why he never felt any pain! He realized that he and the dragon were connected. If he was hurt, the dragon would feel it. If the dragon was hurt, he would feel it. He and the dragon above were as one! Einon smiled knowingly at Bowen.

Stunned, Bowen stared back. Then Einon's gloating smile changed to a look of terror. The wounded dragon was now behind the castle walls. Even worse, he suddenly understood the gift his mother had given him that morning, the Tartar dragonslayers! Maybe they'd try to kill the dragon! Perhaps Einon wasn't immortal after all!

That was when Kara repeated Draco's mysterious words, "Einon will not fall in my lifetime." They all now understood that Einon and Draco's lives were linked together by the heart.

Einon quickly leapt on his horse and galloped back to the castle. He had to get there before anyone tried to kill the fallen dragon!

"I want it alive!" Einon screamed as he burst into the castle. He got there just in time to see his men swarming all over Draco. The dragon was tied down in the main courtyard. The chains binding him were bolted into iron rods sunk into the stones.

"You're alive!" Einon said cruelly as he leered at the pain-wracked dragon. He flashed a sinister grin. "Alive and safe as I will now be—forever!"

"NO!" howled Draco.

High above on the battlements, Queen Aislinn watched, concern for Draco in her eyes. Deep in the forest, Bowen was concerned as well.

"I'll go to save the dragon," he said to his followers. "Who goes with me?"

There were no volunteers.

Then Kara and Friar Gilbert stepped forward. "You will not go alone," said Kara.

When Bowen, Kara, and Friar Gilbert reached the walls of the castle, they were joined by Hewe and his men. Hewe covered Bowen as he crept up the secret stairway to Einon's chambers. Einon was waiting. In a furious sword fight, the two men dueled out of the room, across the cistern, and up to the parapet. Just as Einon was about to thrust his blade in Bowen's chest, he fell with a scream into the cistern, sinking below the surface.

Bowen, holding fast to a pulley, swung down into the courtyard.

"You should have let them kill me," Draco said mournfully. "Now you'll have to do it!"

"But Einon is dead!" cried Bowen. "And besides, alive or dead, he is beaten!"

"You will never win until Einon's evil is destroyed," Draco said in agony. "To do that, you must kill me! My time is over! Strike!"

But Bowen couldn't bring himself to murder his friend. "I can't!"

"Then I will make you!" Draco roared, releasing a bolt of flames at Bowen. "Fight back! Defend yourself!"

Just then, Einon, bloody but very much alive, leapt out of the wreckage of the cistern. Seeing him, Draco sank his fangs into his own claw. The pain shot through Einon's sword arm, and his weapon clattered to the floor. But Einon kept coming.

Bowen raised his ax! Then in a sudden whirl of motion, he flung it at Draco instead. Spinning around, he stabbed Einon and watched the king's body fall down next to Draco's.

Before Draco's eyes dimmed and closed, he gazed up lovingly at Bowen.

Overcome with grief, Bowen knelt at Draco's side. The battle was over, but as the victorious rebels rushed into the courtyard they were stunned into silence by the sight of their fallen comrade and hero, Draco.

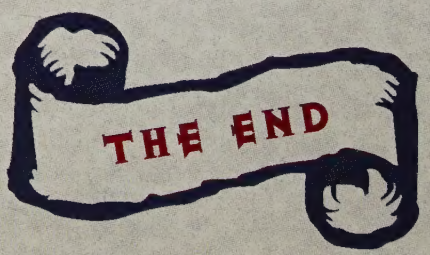
"What now, Draco?" Bowen wept. "You will abandon us now that we're free? Without you what do we do? Where do we turn?"

At that instant, Draco began to dissolve into sparkling white light.

This glowing ball of dragon light hovered in front of Bowen for a few seconds, then whispered, "To the stars, Bowen. To the stars . . ."

The glow then rose into the night sky. A strange light streaked across the heavens, heading straight up to the dragon constellation. Then for a brief moment, Draco's profile lit the sky and twinkled majestically.

Below, the knight and his victorious rebel band felt joy as the beam of dragon starshine warmed them with its love.



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On the day evil King Freyne is killed on the battlefield, young Prince Einon is badly wounded. His mother, Queen Aislinn, makes a pact with a dragon to save her son's life. But Einon, now the new king, chooses tyranny over the teachings of his mentor, Sir Bowen, Knight of the Old Code.

The kingdom is in an uproar. Dragons are on the loose. Peasants are fighting across the land. Disillusioned, Sir Bowen abandons the Old Code, bent on revenge against the dragon who helped save Einon's life. And Kara, a young peasant girl, sows the seeds of rebellion against the new king.

In this magical tenth century kingdom, the question remains: Will peace ever again unite the land? Or will the Old Code die with the last of the great dragons?

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